

Western Grain Transportation Act

I believe, in fact, if I may be so bold, that we could mount a substantive argument which would be acceptable in the final analysis, given the opportunity in the House of Commons. I see the former Minister of Transport sitting nodding his head. I do not know if he is nodding in agreement or whether he is simply amazed. I am not going to ask him. However, I would like to put to him—

Mr. Pepin: I am just wondering if the BCR want to be included.

Mr. Deans: Of course it did. It wants to be involved.

Mr. Benjamin: You should have thought about all this when you drafted the Bill.

Mr. Deans: I think the Minister, given the opportunity, would agree with my argument that shipping of grain would not increase or decrease by including by the British Columbia Railway. Therefore, there would be no additional charge.

Mr. Pepin: BCR already benefits, as you know.

Mr. Deans: I have dealt with the Dominion coal lands question and that is left to your determination. There are two matters before you which can be dealt with, I believe, quite reasonably. Motion No. 173 amends the Schedule and includes new crops. I believe the difficulty with which the Chair and its advisers are faced would be that it would add to the cost as defined in the Royal Recommendation. I believe that may be their problem.

We contend that this is not the case. We are saying that farmers can only use their land for one crop. Therefore, if product "A" is eligible for benefits but product "B" would grow better and there is a market for it, then the farmers should be encouraged to grow product "B".

● (1250)

Mr. Evans: Why do you think we are getting rid of the Crow?

Mr. Benjamin: That does not do it. You do not understand.

Mr. Deans: Simply put, this amendment gives a broader scope to the farmer to determine which of the various products is needed and therefore should qualify under the shipment provisions. If he is not growing grain, then obviously he is not shipping grain. However, if he is growing another product for which there is a market, then quite clearly it can be shipped and will take the place of the grain. It is just that simple. We are not changing the amounts of money, neither are we moving outside of grain. I want to make that point forcefully. We are still talking about grain when we are talking about amendments. Therefore, we urge that you recognize, Madam Speaker, in your reconsideration, that Motion No. 173 should be determined politically rather than on a technical admissibility basis.

Finally, Motion No. 174—

Mr. Benjamin: Go another eight minutes.

Mr. Deans: My colleague says go another eight minutes. You can tell I am going as fast as I can.

Motion No. 174 changes the title of the Bill for the very reason that you, Madam Speaker, were confused about in your third preliminary ruling. We have argued from day one that the purpose of the Bill was to eliminate the statutory freight rate and put in place a new regime. It may also be interpreted as having something to do, substantively or otherwise, with the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain. But nowhere in the long title of the Bill is there any mention at all about the intention of the Government to abolish the statutory grain rate. We find that most objectionable and we think the long title should reflect what is truly in the Bill.

Not only that, but in every single reference, whether one looks at Erskine May or back to British parliamentary tradition, you can find quite clearly that it says categorically that it must reflect what is contained in the Bill. I contend, Madam Speaker, there is no way that any person of average intelligence reading the long title of this Bill—and I put it to you for the last time, "an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof"—could interpret that to mean that we were abolishing the statutory grain rate.

So I return to the argument I made on the Dominion coal lands. Either the long title is wrong and out of order, or the Bill is wrong and out of order. I contend the Bill does not reflect what the long title says and I ask again that the Speaker make a decision on whether or not the Government can proceed with the Bill, given that the long title does not reflect those things. I ask that you make a determination that what is in this Bill is inappropriate and unacceptable, unless it is clearly set out having regard to the clearly understandable definitions of what would be acceptable under the long title.

I have argued since day one that the Bill deals with three matters and that they are unrelated. It deals with the setting up of a regime on transportation not only to handle grain but many other things. It deals with the question of the statutory rate and the decision of the Government to move politically to alter that. It deals with the disposition of the Dominion coal lands. Only one of those three things falls under what could reasonably be interpreted as having anything to do with the long title.

I have asked the Government, as you are aware, Madam Speaker, to alter the Bill in such a way as to allow it to be dealt with as it should have been dealt with. We in this Party are prepared to deal with the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain, and similarly but separately deal with the question of the disposition of the Dominion coal lands. We are prepared to debate the question of the Crow's Nest Pass freight rate. But we do not believe this Bill is proper. We consider the long title as being abrogated because of the Government's insistence on dealing with three unrelated matters.

I ask you, Madam Speaker, to look at the precedents involved and determine whether in fact what we now have before us is properly before us.